Neighborhoods and Networks:

How the built environment shapes the networks that condition social action.

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Studies of Citizen Responses to Neighborhood Change.

- Fight or Flight series: 16 Neighborhoods
  - Krassa & Flood; Tomshack & Krassa.
- Bright Side of NIMBY series: 6 Neighborhoods (includes overlap of four neighborhoods)
  - Krassa; Plater-Zyberk; Krassa & Tomshack
- The work reported today uses all 18 neighborhoods.

Rough outline of hypothesis and research.

- Assertions or hypotheses.
  - Collective Action is conditioned by the pre-existing network among candidates.
  - The physical environment facilitates or hinders social interaction and network formation.
  - Collective action is most likely under conditions of threat.
    - Threat can take many forms, but is largely defined as a change in neighborhood character.
- Data
  - Measures of collective action.
  - Measures of the social network
  - Measures of neighborhood physical and social environment.
- Significance.
  - The physical environment conditions our approach to politics and local action.
    - Nationalization of politics is due, in part, to modern development patterns.
    - Social Darwinism is due, in part, to modern development patterns.
    - Political appeals are more successful when they correspond with values.
- Contextual Modelers, Social Planners, and Political Science generally, *ignores environmental conditioning of behaviors and attitudes.*
- Stinchcombian Tests/Statements.
  - The social network matters. If the tendency to act collectively is influenced by the social network, then the spatial dispersion of the network affects what issues will evoke collective action.
  - If the environment conditions networks, then the environment affects collective action.

Data Collection.

- Interviews with residents.
  - About neighborhood; about neighbors; values; about threat.
    - Open ended depth interviews and instrument guided (surveys).
- Observation of neighborhood, residents, and public spaces.
  - Use patterns; neighborhood quality; neighborhood design; house and street features; public space features.
- Formal and Official Records
  - Plat maps. Zoning ordinances. HOA CC&R's.
  - Tax records. Sales records.
- Voting and turnout patterns, contribution records.
- Realtor interviews.
- Public official interviews ("troublemakers," "activists," etc.)
- Third place interviews (patrons and proprietors) and observation.

Threats to neighborhood character.

- Increase in crime.
- Increase in traffic.
- Widen street; increase traffic or traffic speed.
- Planned “community” (half way) house.
- Planned senior citizen home.
- Planned strip mall.
- Planned big-box store.
- Planned school.
- Planned theater or “night spot.”
- Planned porn theater/store.
- Planned changes to park (lights/parking).
- Planned gas station.
- Planned clinic (clinic/methadone), (mens) shelter.

Modal Responses to Change Threat

- Individual Action.

  Put up the “for sale” sign and leave.

- Collective Action.

  Work with neighbors to stop or alter the threat.

Kinds of Collective Action Observed

- Organize neighborhood.
- Circulate petitions locally.
- Hold neighborhood meetings & strategy/info sessions.
- Lobby city council for changes, accommodations (e.g., traffic calming, design changes).
- Protest actions of various types.
- Work with developer for more acceptable development.
- Form neighborhood watch.
- Lobby community (letters to editor, solicit support from other organizations, etc.).
- Become politically active (endorse/run candidate, etc.)

Social and Economic factors that influence resident response.

- Social Networks.
  - Dense local networks favor collective action.
  - Distributed networks favor individual action.

- "Substitutability."
  - Related to house, neighborhood, and network.
  - Ready substitutes favor individual action (moving).
    - Substitutes occur when similar housing situations are available nearby. Substitutability is high if moving doesn't dramatically affect friendship network, commute, or housing.

Attitudinal Factors that influence resident response.

(Interviews with residents.)

- Values.
  "What do they like about the neighborhood?"
  - The higher property values were listed, the more likely the owner prefers individual response.
  - The higher that privacy ranked, the more likely the owner prefers the individual response.
  - The higher community, neighbors, and friends were listed, the more likely the owner was to engage in collective action.
  - The higher neighborhood character was listed, the more likely the owners engage in collective action.
    - Mostly applies to historic neighborhoods; also NU neighborhood.

Values: Five top mentions of what they like about the neighborhood.

- **Suburban**
  1. Privacy
  2. Investment value
  3. Schools
  4. House features (deck, big yard, etc.)
  5. "country feeling"

  Inward directed, personal.

- **Urban**
  1. Convenience
  2. Friends & neighbors
  3. Neighborhood style (architecture, trees, parks, etc.)
  4. Proximity to work, shops, entertainment
  5. Lack of commute

  Outward/other directed (except 5),

Design Features that Influence Resident Response.

- Street Form (*c.f.* Southworth definitions)
  - Grid .67 (=probability of collective action among residents)
  - Modified Grid .59
  - Regular Residential/Collector/Arterial .41
  - Loops & Cul de Sacs .11
- Public Spaces
  - General purpose parks (add .04 per resident use indicator)
  - street furniture (add .02 per instance)
  - "Third places" inside neighborhood (Oldenburg) (add .29 each)
- Housing Features
  - Small set-backs or "build to" (add .07)
  - Street orientation features like large porches (add .11 for porches, .21 for public yard, .23 for front living space (living room))
  - Sidewalks (add .04)
  - Service alleys (add .11)

Miscellaneous Factors

(presence increases collective action)

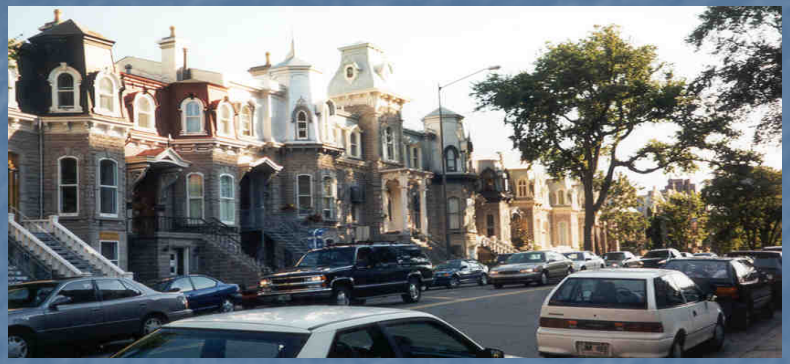
- Unique housing.
  - Historic districts; novel subdivisions; unique placement of neighborhood (highly desirable location) all increase collective action.
- Tree-lined streets. (Increase p by .07)
- High pedestrian use.
- Neighborhood school (walkable distance)
- Neighborhood employment (walk to work)
- Stable population; long term residents.
- Mixed use.
- Mix of housing types and prices.
- Easy access to public accommodations (libraries, pubs, restaurants, theaters, churches, etc.)

Demographically comparable neighborhoods that differ in the response to neighborhood threat.

Active Neighborhood with dense local network, “unique” housing, good public spaces, houses w/public frontage, and median price of $195,000.
South Bend, IN

Flight Neighborhood with absent local network, ready supply of similar housing, no public spaces, houses w/no public front, and median price of $190,000 (all priced same in 2000).
South Bend, IN.

Physical attributes that correlate with high collective action.



Grid streetplan, high foot traffic, good public spaces and easy access to “Third Places”.

Low substitutability. Similar neighborhoods and houses not readily found. Berkeley, CA. (

Houses with public orientation, seen in front porches, bigger house than garage, street presence.

Trees *(for Bill)*. A “pleasant” landscape.

Physical characteristics of neighborhoods predisposed to individual action (*flight*).

High substitutability. Wide streets on collector system discourages mixing, relatively barren landscape (little furniture, amenities), low foot traffic. Champaign, IL

Cul de sac systems minimize interaction and maximize privacy. Loop plans ease traffic slightly without decreasing privacy or increasing interaction.

Activities move to backyard, enhancing privacy but decreasing interaction.

When garage is main feature of the houses there is less social interaction as well as tendency for less foot traffic. Fewer casual encounters.

Five Factors in last example that predispose these areas to individual action.

- High substitutability. Similar (replacement) homes and neighborhoods easily found.
- Low neighborhood integration and interaction. When it is hard to know your neighbors, you probably won't.
  - Small portion of network is neighborhood based.
- Emphasis on privacy encourages individual action rather than collective action.
- Emphasis on property values encourages a sure, "quick fix" rather than more uncertain collective effort.
  - What happens if collective effort fails? I'm out a bundle.
- Low diversity. Where everybody knows and does the same thing, weak ties are few.

Conclusions

- Increased Collective Action.
  - Hard to replace house.
  - Design factors that increase local interaction.
  - Presence of public spaces.
  - House features that facilitate interaction.
  - Mixed use.
  - Neighborhood diversity.
  - Desirable features (trees)
  - Cost of moving is large because house is unique and social price is large.
- Individual Action (Move).
  - Ready and convenient substitute for house.
  - Design factors that make local interaction more difficult.
  - Cost of move is small because another house is easy to find and the social price is small.

Why?

- Certain physical features increase the presence of local social networks.
- Locally based social networks increase the chance of collective action *and* decrease substutability.
  - Features that encourage interaction.
    - Density increases probability of encounters.
    - Third places increase encounters, convenience, and uniqueness.
    - Convenience to work, school, third places add to uniquenes.
    - Grid system increases probability of interactions.
    - Cul de sacs increase privacy (decrease interaction)
    - Neighborhood attractions– tree canopy, street furniture, safe streets, public spaces, etc.
  - Features that encourage individual action.
    - Private orientation to houses.
    - Automobile dependence. Most activities outside neighborhood.
    - Similar homes elsewhere.
    - Most of social network found elsewhere.

NIMBY as Collective Action

NIMBY is value laden, usually condemning residents for opposing a social good that may damage property values or lifestyle.

NIMBY takes place in neighborhoods with the same conditions that predict other forms of collective action.

NIMBY is an indicator of strong internal, neighborhood based networks. When flight is the alternative to NIMBY the pattern is analogous to the Fight or Flight.

Conjecture

- Fact: Suburbs typically vote Republican & Urban areas vote Democratic. This holds true even within income controlled.
- *Might design play a role in this?*
  - 1. Value patterns of residents.
  - 2. Party platforms.
  - 3. Comparison of areas.

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Partisan Appeals, since 1964.

(Most emphasized portions of presidential party platforms.)

- Republicans
  - Social Darwinism (80)
  - Tax cuts
  - Small government
  - Personal responsibility
  - Move kids to better schools (vouchers, NCLB, etc.)

Individual directed.

- Democrats
  - War on poverty
  - Welfare, healthcare
  - Minority rights
  - School funding
  - Environment

Other directed.

Rudimentary Test....

- Detroit (Langhauls)
  - Suburban style in city
    - 1996 71% Dole
    - 2000 82% Bush
- Vaalter, Md.
  - True Suburb
    - 1996 69% Dole
    - 2000 82% Bush
- South Bend (Forrest)
  - Urban style in city
    - 1996 32% Dole
    - 2000 19% Bush
- Kentlands, Md.
  - Urban style in suburb
    - 1996 54% Dole
    - 2000 59% Bush

Party appeals and resident values.

- Republican appeals have focused on individualism and personal responsibility for one's plight. This matches what people like most about suburban style developments.

- Democratic appeals have focused on improving the collective, our responsibility to others, helping groups. Urban/New Urban style residents named outward oriented features as most liked.